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September 26, 1996

The Honorable William J. Perry
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington D.C. 20301-1000

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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Secretary Perry:

Please let me take this opportunity to reintroduce myself. I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance last April 23, when I was privileged enough to meet you at a luncheon for the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference # 59. My JCOC experience was one I was honored and privileged to make, and I will long remember the trip.

I am writing you at this time to extend to you an invitation to attend the Bay County, Florida Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee (MAC) 50th anniversary celebration as our keynote speaker on Saturday, November 16, 1996 at the Bay Point Marriott, located on Panama City Beach. The occasion will be attended by current and former Bay County MAC members, Senators Bob Graham and Connie Mack, Representatives Pete Peterson and Joe Scarborough, other distinguished guests and, hopefully, yourself.

We believe our MAC has a long and distinguished history.

Our community welcomed the current Coastal Systems Station when the mine countermeasure research mission was transferred from Solomons Island, MD to the newly created U.S. Navy Mine Countermeasures Station in 1945. The Station received laboratory status as the U.S. Naval Mine Defense Laboratory in 1955. We were grateful for the expansion of the Lab as the Naval Ship Research and Development Laboratory in 1967. In 1972, as its mission expanded to include inshore undersea warfare and amphibious operations, we greeted the Naval Coastal Systems Laboratory. Our base was renamed the Naval Coastal Systems Center in 1978 and finally the Coastal Systems Station in 1992. We are proud of the base's presence in our midst, prouder still of the support it provides to the mission of research, development, test, and evaluation for mine and undersea countermeasures, special warfare, amphibious warfare, diving and other naval missions that take place primarily in the coastal region.

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We are every bit as proud of our companion military facility, Tyndall Air Force Base. Tyndall Air Force Base (then Tyndall Field) accepted its first students to flexible gunnery school on December 7, 1941. After World War II, Tyndall came under the authority of the Tactical Air

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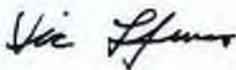
Command, transferring to the Air Training Command at the outbreak of the Korean War and providing aircrew interceptor training. In 1957, Tyndall became part of the Air Defense Command, evaluating the effectiveness of ADC fighter interceptors and conducting drone guidance, navigation aids, and high altitude operations and training. In 1981, TAC activated the 325th Fighter Weapons Wing with F-101, F-106, and T-33 aircraft while preparing for the arrival of Tyndall's F-15s, which remain to this day. Our community is thrilled with Tyndall's selection by the Air Force as the nation's only training site for the F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighter when they come into use.

As you can see, Bay County and the Military Affairs Committee have had a long and mutually beneficial relationship with the Coastal Systems Station and Tyndall Air Force Base. We are extremely grateful for their presence because we realize they are not merely military installations in our community. The bases and the military, civilian, and contractor personnel they employ are integral parts of our community, filling roles in all facets of the social, economic, cultural, educational, athletic, and religious communities in Bay County. They are completely woven into the fabric of our community. The MAC has tried in every way to facilitate this integration, and is proud to be celebrating its 50th anniversary.

During our 50 year existence, we have had the pleasure of welcoming literally hundreds, if not thousands, of Department of Defense visitors to Bay County. For example, in the near past our guests have included the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Air Force. President Clinton flew into Tyndall recently on his way to visit our community college to showcase it as an example of how such institutions should be run. It seems the only person we have not had grace our presence is that of the Secretary of Defense, and we wish to take the MAC's 50th birthday party to rectify that situation!

It is our sincere hope that you will be able to attend our 50th anniversary celebration. Your staff may contact myself at (b)(6) or the Bay County Chamber of Commerce President, Jim Cherry at (b)(6) for more information.

Sincerely,



Vic L. Jones
Chairman, Military Affairs Committee